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## Songwriters seek 'Higher Ground' with new CD

By Lisa Malakaua

“Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.” -- Dalai Lama

Are you looking for motivational, innovative and inspirational music that is so infectious that you just can't help but getting into the groove of it?

Then we may have found the perfect CD for you! Perryscope Records, Peck Tunes LLC and Kumanu Music announced Dec. 29 the release of their latest CD, Higher Ground -- The Songs of Howard Shapiro & Gregg Perry.

The eclectic anthology album is from the songwriting team of Shapiro and Perry and all songs on their newest album were originally included in the CD releases of Earth Patriot, We Are 'Ohana-Songs of Hope, See the Flame and Random Notes - A Songwriter's Journey.

Shapiro, a Grammy Award nominated songwriter, and Perry, a Hoku Award nominated producer/engineer, are veteran songwriters. They share a history of writing, producing and recording music dating back more than 40 years. The writers' site several influences in their songwriting style, which includes rock, pop, R&B, blues, gospel, classical and jazz.

This blend of genres has been integrated into their original music to create a new style referred to as global fusion.



Gregg Perry, Stephan Oberhoff & Howard Shapiro

The compelling result is clearly evident on this newest release. “We’ve incorporated a ‘60’s social consciousness with 21st century production techniques crossing cultural, generational and political lines and still remain holistic in scope,” Shapiro said.

“We strive to educate, entertain and empower others through our songwriting and musical projects,” Perry added.

Hawai'i Island music critic John Burnett stated simply: “Gregg and Howard are doing truly meaningful stuff that is still excellent music -- not common and absolutely not easy. It is a privilege and an honor to know a couple of the ‘good guys’.”

Musicians included on the album are Stephen Oberhoff,

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Terry Secor, Rupert Tripp Jr., Ahti Mohala, Keoki Kahumoku, Damon Williams, Tioni Tam Sing, James McWhinney, Glynn Motoishi, Lou Ann Gurney and Lani Star. Hawaiian Chants are performed by Kaliko Beamer-Trapp and Leilehua Yuen.

Shapiro and Perry said they strongly believe music can be a catalyst for change and empowerment and ask their listeners to support independent artists and musicians through the purchase of their art.

During our recent interview at Borders-Hilo over hot tea, Shapiro and Perry brought along a special German guest to join us - Stephan Oberhoff.

Oberhoff mixed Shapiro and Perry's latest CD. He also produces and plays keys/guitar/vocals for Melissa Manchester, Brenda Russell and Amanda McBroom and is an independent studio owner and producer from Los Angeles.

BIW asked Oberhoff about his latest projects and he replies, "I released a CD in 2003, Conversations with My Father. The material on the CD is mostly Brazilian/gospel/funk in an instrumental format and features a huge list of L.A.'s finest session players. And the material, except one cover tune is all original and very delicate in its compositions," Stephan said.

Currently, Oberhoff is working on a new project, which is mostly Brazilian and world-music oriented, and it may see the light of day by mid 2010.

To learn more about Stephan and to hear samples of his music, visit <http://www.myspace.com/stephanoberhoff>.

The best way to describe these musicians and their work is simple -- cool and classy!

Higher Ground • The Songs of Howard Shapiro & Gregg Perry is now available online at [www.pecktunes.com](http://www.pecktunes.com).

Shapiro and Perry welcome the opportunity to work with creative and financial partners, filmmakers, producers and performers in all artistic media. For more information, contact Howard Shapiro or Gregg Perry at 808-985-8725 or 808-966-4153; via e-mail at [artpeace@hawaiiintel.net](mailto:artpeace@hawaiiintel.net) and [gregg@pecktunes.com](mailto:gregg@pecktunes.com); and via the Web at <http://www.pecktunes.com> and <http://www.artistsandpeace.org>.

*Photos courtesy of Lisa Malakaua, Jeanne Galarneau & Gregg Perry.*



*Higher Ground • The Songs of Howard Shapiro & Gregg Perry*



*Howard Shapiro*



*Gregg Perry*

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